



Bronchial brachytherapy

This leaflet explains what happens when you have brachytherapy for bronchial tumours. It is a guide to help you understand more about this type of treatment and the procedure involved.

The cancer specialist is in charge of your care and, during this leaflet, we will refer to him/her as the oncologist. The oncologist in charge of the brachytherapy will see you some time before your treatment, and explain the procedure to you.

You will also have the chance to discuss your treatment with the brachytherapy staff. If you wish you can see the room where the treatment is given.

You could be seen by both male and/or female radiographers when you have your treatment.

What is brachytherapy?

Brachytherapy is a form of radiotherapy given by directly introducing a radiation source into the part of your body we want to treat. The brachytherapy machine uses a small radioactive source which produces gamma rays.

What does the treatment involve?

Usually it will be necessary to admit you to hospital for your treatment, as you will require a general anaesthetic to enable a small tube to be passed into your bronchus while you are asleep.

You will probably be asked to come to hospital the day before the treatment. This is to carry out routine tests to make sure that you can be given an anaesthetic safely.

- You will not be allowed anything to eat or drink from 12 midnight on the night before the anaesthetic.
- This procedure will take about 1½ hours but the treatment itself will usually take only about 10 - 25 minutes.
- The anaesthetic will be given to you in theatre. When you wake from the anaesthetic you will be aware of a fine tube coming out of your nose.
- Once you have recovered from the anaesthetic you will be taken on a trolley to the CT scanner. The brachytherapy radiographer will take a CT scan to check that the tube is in the right position.

- You will then be taken to the brachytherapy treatment room. This is where the free end of the tube coming out of your nose will be connected to the treatment machine while you are still lying on the trolley. The radioactive source used for the treatment travels along this tube by remote control.
- The staff will leave the room while the treatment is in progress. However, they will be watching you on a TV screen in the control area nearby, and will also be able to talk to you via an intercom.
- As each patient is different, your treatment is worked out especially for you. The actual treatment time will therefore vary, but will usually last between 10 and 25 minutes.
- At the end of your treatment the radioactive source is withdrawn back into the machine by remote control.
- The staff will then come back into the room to you. The tube is removed after the treatment. This is completely painless, and you will be taken back to the ward.

You may be allowed home the same day, but the oncologist will advise you at the time. However, we strongly advise you to have a responsible adult to go home with you.

Are there any side-effects?

It is unusual for patients to experience any major side-effects after this treatment. However, you may have some increased coughing for a few days after treatment and sometimes a mild sore throat.

If you have already had a course of radiotherapy before brachytherapy, you may experience effects from both of the treatments - such as a slight sore throat or some discomfort while swallowing. These side-effects usually resolve on their own within a week or so.

We hope you find this information helpful. However, the brachytherapy staff will always do their best to answer any further questions you have about this treatment.

Contacts

If you have any queries about the information in this leaflet, please contact:

Brachytherapy Unit: 020 3826 2629

Radiotherapy Clinic Nurses:
020 3826 2186

Radiotherapy Clinic Radiographers:
020 3826 2612

Consent: It is a legal requirement to have a signed Consent Form from you before the start of your treatment.

If you have already been given one of these forms, please bring the completed form with you when you come for your first appointment.

If you have not been given a form, this will be discussed with you at your first appointment.

Identification: It is a legal requirement for the staff to check your name and details against your treatment sheet and your hospital name band each time you attend. You must wear your name band at all times whilst in hospital.

Pregnancy/fathering a child

Female patients must not be pregnant or become pregnant and male patients must not father a child during a course of radiotherapy or for some months afterwards. **Please discuss this with your cancer specialist.**

If you think there is a chance, however small, of you or your partner being pregnant during treatment, it is extremely important that you discuss this with your oncologist, radiographer or nurse as soon as possible.

Female patients will be asked to confirm their pregnancy status prior to radiotherapy. This applies to all women between the ages of 12-55 years. This is a legal requirement.

Other help and support

People who have cancer often say that during their illness they experience a range of emotions. Many find it to be a stressful, anxious and confusing time.

If you would like further information about any aspect of cancer and its treatments, including the supportive services offered at the LJMC, please drop in to the centre or call the Helpline.

The staff at the LJMC work as part of the overall team caring for you and include healthcare professionals and trained volunteers. The centre provides a relaxed setting in which to talk and ask questions.

The LJMC is situated between the main Cancer Centre building and Gate 3 (White Hill).

 **Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre**
... supporting people affected by cancer...

Services offered at the LJMC include:

- ① Drop-in centre
- ① Telephone helpline
- ① Benefits advice*
- ① Complementary therapies*
- ① Relaxation classes
- ① Counselling*
- ① Look Good...Feel Better™ beauty workshops
- ① The Way Ahead headwear workshops
- ① Self-help courses

* These services are only available to NHS patients under the care of an oncologist based at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre

Mon-Fri: **9.30am–4.30pm**

Telephone Helpline: **020 3826 2555**

Website: **www.ljmc.org**